

Appln No. 09/942,601
Amdt. Dated May 13, 2004
Response to Office action of March 31, 2004

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The objections and submissions made by the Examiner in the Office Action have carefully been considered and it is submitted that distinguishing features are present in the invention and now are brought out in the amended claims.

Claims – Obviousness

The Examiner has maintained his objection to claims 1 to 6 and claim 8 on the basis of them being obvious to a skilled addressee in light of the disclosure in Bobry (US 6,229,565).

In response, Applicant has amended claim 1 so as to further highlight its essential features. Further to that, Applicant submits that at least some of the essential features of the present invention are not disclosed in Bobry, neither are they obvious in light of his disclosure.

The subject invention attempts to facilitate data transfer between two relatively independent devices, the main focus being on a compact and detachable printer. Correspondingly, features such as the **camera having a sleeve to releasably engage the printer carrier** and the **printer carrier being PCMCIA-sized and carrying sheets of media**, are essential for the invention. This overall focus is also the reason why a strong emphasis has been placed in the amended claim 1 on the fact that then image recorder is **configured for releasable engagement** with the printing unit and that the sensing microprocessor and the printing microprocessor of the printing unit are connected via **releasable data connectors**.

In contrast, the combined printer-camera device according to the invention of Bobry is aimed at avoiding the need for data transfer between independent devices, such as cameras, computers and printers. The result is a "self contained recording apparatus" that amalgamates a camera and a printer into a single unit. Bobry does briefly mention the possibility of separating the two devices, but then goes on to direct his preferred embodiment away from this idea. None of the above essential features are disclosed in Bobry. Furthermore, by intentionally directing his invention to a single unit, Bobry not only fails to mention the problems addressed by the present invention, but he also teaches away from this invention.

Correspondingly, it is submitted that an ordinary worker in this field, apprised of the Bobry document, would not have derived the specific combination of features defined by claim 1 as a matter of straightforward routine. It is further submitted that, whilst in hindsight some of these features may look obvious, none of them has been disclosed within the context of the subject invention in anyone of the other prior art document known to the Applicant. Thus, Applicant would appreciate if the Examiner provides support for his obviousness objection. The Applicant further submits that it is, in fact, not the individual features, but the combination of features that defines the overall boundaries of the invention.

In light of the above discussion, it is submitted that claim 1 clearly possesses the requisite inventive step to qualify for patentability. Consequently, claims 2 to 6 and 8 are also non-obvious, by virtue of their dependence on claim 1.

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Examiner has also maintained his objection to claim 7, as being unpatentable over Bobry in view of Hawkins (6,154,254), and claim 9, as being unpatentable over Bobry in view of Kokubo (6,007,195). However, because of the appendance of these claims to claim 1 and in view of the above discussion, it is submitted that claims 7 and 9 are now also novel and inventive when compared to the cited prior art document, whether considered separately or in combination.

In light of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that all of the Examiner's objections have been successfully traversed. Accordingly, the Applicant believes that the application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of the application is courteously solicited.

Applicant acknowledges that the Examiner is not bound to consider the introduced amendments if the Examiner feels new issues are raised. However, it is submitted that this amendment represents only a clarification of part of the interrelationship between the image recorder and the printer and does not, therefore, introduce additional matters for consideration. Accordingly, it would be appreciated if the Examiner would consider these amendments together with the above submissions.

Very respectfully,

Applicant:



KIA SILVERBROOK

C/o:

Silverbrook Research Pty Ltd
393 Darling Street
Balmain NSW 2041, Australia

Email:

kia.silverbrook@silverbrookresearch.com

Telephone:

+612 9818 6633

Facsimile:

+61 2 9555 7762